

Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers of Mizoram on In-service Training Programmes under RMSA

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Abstract

Development in any field including the professional development of teachers must always be accompanied by equity to ensure the balanced growth of education in the state. This study attempts to compare the perceptions of different groups of teachers who attend the in-service training programmes for secondary school teachers in Mizoram under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) on three aspects – utility of training programmes, capabilities of resource persons and problems encountered. The teachers were classified along their geographical locations (districts), gender, teaching experience and subject taught. Training Centres in all eight districts of Mizoram were visited and data was an opinionnaire prepared by the researcher. Differences in perceptions were discovered in various areas and recommendations to minimise such variations were attempted.

Keywords: In-service Training Programme, Secondary School Teachers, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Utility, Capabilities, Problems, District, Gender, Experience, Subject

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) Scheme has been hailed as a worthy successor of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and has led to the overhauling of the secondary education in India in so many ways. The targeted sector i.e. secondary education has received a fresh fillip through the influx of additional funds for construction works, acquisition of new materials, hiring of additional teachers and other equity and intervention programmes. The impact of RMSA has exceeded expectations in many states and has given a much-needed boost to the state education machinery in more ways than one. The thrust for qualitative improvement in secondary education must be continued without slack in all areas. Mizoram is one of the remotest states in India and is still plagued by a variety of maladies in education and teacher education as well. In order to achieve the objective of universalization of secondary education, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan has made great inroads in several areas through concerted efforts. These efforts of the RMSA can be seen in almost all aspect of secondary education and their implications have been felt in every nook and cranny of secondary education. Although certain aspects of the RMSA scheme are more visible than others, and their implications and results instantly observable; there are other areas of the RMSA drive which go deeper into the system, and their ramifications are felt as aftershocks. The interventions that are conducted through RMSA are therefore varied and diverse but for the sake of simplicity and ease of study, we shall categorize them into three main components – development of physical infrastructure, interventions to increase quality of education and initiatives to ensure equity among all the children involved. The main component of professional development activities undertaken by the RMSA is the in-service training programmes for schoolteachers.

These training programmes were initially designed to last a duration of 5-days, although they were later increased to 10 days; with separate programmes organized for different school subjects. In Mizoram, the training programmes are not coordinated from the state office but are conducted by each district office separately. Resource persons from within and outside RMSA are invited; with personnel being outsourced from Institute of Advance Studies in Education (IASE) , District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Degree Colleges, Mizoram University to name a few. The programmes are conducted in various locations including IASE, DIETs, Block resource Center (BRC), Halls, Schools, etc. as per convenience. Teachers are given TA/DA as per RMSA norms for attending these programmes which may be changed from time to time according to government regulations. The in-service training programmes conducted by the RMSA (Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan) are perhaps the only in-service training programmes organized with regularity in Mizoram. Although other agencies like the State Council for Educational Research and Training, Institute of

Advanced Study in Education, Mizoram University. may conduct training programmes from time to time, the logistics involved ensure that participation is minimal and that the programmes are few and far in between. The in-service training programmes for secondary teachers therefore rest largely on the hands of the RMSA and the quality of their training programmes with regards to facilities and resources gain due significance. Regarding the teaching methodology in Inservice training programme, Bhutta (2004) has argued that making decisions and planning for instructional strategies is a critical step in teaching because planned activities improve student outcomes. Padhy (2015) has added that the learning environment has to be suitably designed. Mishra, P, 2016 found that There was not positive impact of RMSA in-service education on social science teachers' performance regarding classroom management, which demands training of all working teachers with more focus on classroom management. Chamyal (2017) made a comparative study of the knowledge of RMSA among secondary and senior secondary school teachers.

Therefore, this study will try to ascertain the adequacy and quality of the RMSA in-service training programmes and make suggestions and recommendations whenever and wherever needed

Mizoram had 8 districts at the time of the study namely Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, Lawngtlai, Lunglei, Mamit, Siahla and Serchhip. Some of these districts may be classed as educationally backward with poor performance of students and a general lack of infrastructure and facilities including manpower (Lalrinliana, 2016). Studies by RIE (2017) as well as Kumar (2017) have shown that the educational standard has been observed to be positively affected by in-service training of teachers (RIE, 2017). However, these in-service training programmes have often been seen to be plagued by problems and difficulties which have limited their utility and usefulness (Mahiwal & Kumar, 2017). Hopefully, this study will shed some light into the problem areas regarding the in-service training programmes for secondary teachers in Mizoram under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA).

This study mainly strives to detect lack of equity, if any, in the in-service training programmes for secondary school teachers which are organised in the State of Mizoram, which falls under the purview of RMSA (MHRD, 2016). Mizoram as a state must develop equitably in all areas including education and teacher education. There must not be areas or pockets which are educationally more backward or less developed than the rest of the state. Hence, in the specific case of the in-service training of secondary school teachers, a uniform level of achievement and utility must be achieved in all the districts without major variations in capabilities of resource persons or problems encountered (Pattanshetti, 2016, Kalita, S. 2017,).

Another important point may be made with regards to gender. Teachers are either male or female and sometimes the gender introduces variations in the value of a programme to the concerned person. It must be verified that there are no biases on account of gender and that both genders receive equitable treatment with no variations in utility of training programmes, capabilities of resource persons or problems encountered.

Teachers also vary in the length of their service or their teaching experience. It is possible that the training programmes may not provide equitable learning conditions for senior or junior teachers. Hence it must be made sure that the training programmes are equally suitable in all respects for senior as well as junior teachers and that it meets the need of all teachers.

Lastly, secondary schools are characterized by specialisation of subjects. Different subject teachers sometimes require dissimilar things and care must be made that the needs of all the various subject teachers are met in these training programmes.

Thus, the present study was conducted with the following objectives in mind:

1. To compare various districts in terms of trainee perceptions on utility of training programmes, capabilities of resource persons and problems encountered.
2. To compare the perceptions of different teachers based on their gender, teaching experience and subject taught.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study utilises a descriptive survey method. The population consists of all the secondary school teachers in Mizoram who are eligible to attend the in-service training programmes under RMSA and numbered 2936 in total. Out of these 500 teachers were selected as the sample. The selection from various districts was done proportionately. A proportionate number of male (350) and female (150) teachers as well as junior (<10yrs experience) and senior teachers (>10yrs experience) were selected for the purpose of the study. Also, equal number of subject teachers numbering 100 each were selected for the sample. The researcher developed an opinionnaire which was distributed to all the trainees after preliminary explanations. The opinionnaire was also translated into Mizo. It consisted of three main dimensions – Effect and Utility of the training programmes (15 items), capabilities of Resource Persons (7 items) and Problems encountered (8 items). The data, after tabulation was analyzed using percentages and chi-square tests of independence.

Findings of the Study

A. Comparison of perceptions of teachers from various districts

Sl no	Item	χ^2 (df = 21)	Significance
UTILITY OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES			
1	Subject Mastery	$\chi^2 = 31.22$	Not Significant
2	Proficiency in Teaching Skills	$\chi^2 = 43.3$	Significant (0.01)
3	Classroom Management	$\chi^2 = 44.89$	Significant (0.01)
4	Variety in Learning Experiences	$\chi^2 = 56.52$	Significant (0.01)
5	Using Non-Conventional Resources	$\chi^2 = 34.18$	Not Significant
6	Management of Working Relationships	$\chi^2 = 24.55$	Not Significant
7	Mobilisation of Community Resources	$\chi^2 = 11.19$	Not Significant
8	Development of Parent-Teacher Relationship	$\chi^2 = 22.52$	Not Significant
9	Professional Development	$\chi^2 = 36.82$	Significant (0.05)
10	Balance of Lifestyle	$\chi^2 = 45.93$	Significant (0.01)
11	Conducting Discussions	$\chi^2 = 34.5$	Significant (0.05)
12	Presentation of Concepts	$\chi^2 = 25.75$	Not Significant
13	Enrichment of Content Knowledge	$\chi^2 = 30.84$	Not Significant
14	Assessment and Evaluation	$\chi^2 = 66.65$	Significant (0.01)
15	Identification of Student Weaknesses	$\chi^2 = 34$	Significant (0.05)
CAPABILITIES OF RESOURCE PERSONS			
1	Academic Qualification	$\chi^2 = 41.07$	Significant (0.01)
2	Adequate Experience	$\chi^2 = 42.19$	Not Significant
3	Realistic Experience	$\chi^2 = 32.45$	Not Significant
4	ICT Skills	$\chi^2 = 18.79$	Not Significant
5	Open-mindedness and Empathy	$\chi^2 = 33.18$	Significant (0.05)
6	Pedagogic Skills	$\chi^2 = 35.16$	Significant (0.05)
7	Adequate Preparation	$\chi^2 = 30.31$	Not Significant
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED			
1	Transportation Problem	$\chi^2 = 42.96$	Significant (0.01)
2	Accommodation Problem	$\chi^2 = 53.45$	Significant (0.01)
3	Language Problem	$\chi^2 = 36.32$	Significant (0.05)
4	Lack of Support Materials	$\chi^2 = 73.04$	Significant (0.01)
5	Mistreatment form Staff	$\chi^2 = 39.04$	Significant (0.01)
6	Resistance from School	$\chi^2 = 39.55$	Significant (0.01)
7	Lack of Infrastructure	$\chi^2 = 79.16$	Significant (0.01)
8	Programme Timings	$\chi^2 = 58.65$	Significant (0.01)

1. Effect and utility of training programmes.

It was observed that there was no significant difference between the various districts in the six (6) areas like Mastery of Subject Content, Management of Working Relationships, Mobilization of Community Resources, Developing Parent-Teacher Relationships, Presentation of Concepts and Enrichment of Content Knowledge.

It was observed that there was significant difference between the various districts in the nine (9) areas like Proficiency in Teaching Skills, Classroom Management, Variety of Learning Experience, Use of Non-conventional Resources, Professional Development, Lifestyle Balance, Conducting Discussions, Assessment and Evaluation and Identification of Student Weaknesses. The trainees from Lawngtlai and Siaha Districts had expressed very positive opinions higher than the rest of the districts in most areas concerning the effect and utility of the training programmes. The opinions of trainees from Kolasib and Mamit Districts had been observed to be lower than the rest of the state in some dimensions.

2. Capabilities of Resource Persons.

It was observed that there was no significant difference between the various districts in the following three (3) areas like Realistic nature of experience, ICT Skills and Adequacy of preparation regarding the capabilities of the resource persons:

It was also observed that there was indeed a statistically significant difference between the various districts in the following four (4) areas like Academic qualification, Adequacy of experience, Open-mindedness and empathy and Pedagogic Skills regarding the capabilities of the resource persons:

Trainees from Serchhip and Lawngtlai Districts had expressed the most positive opinions about the capabilities of the resource persons. Trainees from Champhai District have divulged poorest opinions about the capabilities of the resource persons.

3. Problems encountered.

It was seen that there were significant differences between the various districts in all of the eight (8) problem areas, namely: Transportation, Accommodation, Language, Support Materials, Mistreatment from Staff, Resistance from Schools, Lack of Infrastructure and Timing of Programmes.

The trainees from Aizawl, Lunglei and Champhai Districts had expressed very low incidences of problems encountered by them. The trainees from Kolasib District and Serchhip District complained of a few problems. However, the trainees from Siaha District and Mamit District had complained of several problematic issues.

B. Comparison of the perceptions of different teachers based on their Gender.

Sl no	Item	χ^2 (df = 3)	Significance
UTILITY OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES			
1	Subject Mastery	$\chi^2 = 1.548733$	Not Significant
2	Proficiency in Teaching Skills	$\chi^2 = 4.69105$	Not Significant
3	Classroom Management	$\chi^2 = 1.842672$	Not Significant
4	Variety in Learning Experiences	$\chi^2 = 0.857208$	Not Significant
5	Using Non-Conventional Resources	$\chi^2 = 4.3563$	Not Significant
6	Management of Working Relationships	$\chi^2 = 1.82441$	Not Significant
7	Mobilisation of Community Resources	$\chi^2 = 3.074992$	Not Significant
8	Development of Parent-Teacher Relationship	$\chi^2 = 0.214588$	Not Significant
9	Professional Development	$\chi^2 = 0.893825$	Not Significant
10	Balance of Lifestyle	$\chi^2 = 0.505893$	Not Significant
11	Conducting Discussions	$\chi^2 = 4.137077$	Not Significant
12	Presentation of Concepts	$\chi^2 = 0.569939$	Not Significant
13	Enrichment of Content Knowledge	$\chi^2 = 6.52226$	Not Significant
14	Assessment and Evaluation	$\chi^2 = 8.636482$	Significant (0.05)
15	Identification of Student Weaknesses	$\chi^2 = 1.548733$	Not Significant
CAPABILITIES OF RESOURCE PERSONS			
1	Academic Qualification	$\chi^2 = 7.669543$	Not Significant
2	Adequate Experience	$\chi^2 = 7.051186$	Not Significant
3	Realistic Experience	$\chi^2 = 6.053396$	Not Significant
4	ICT Skills	$\chi^2 = 9.789346$	Significant (0.05)
5	Open-mindedness and Empathy	$\chi^2 = 6.540693$	Not Significant
6	Pedagogic Skills	$\chi^2 = 5.583468$	Not Significant
7	Adequate Preparation	$\chi^2 = 4.696303$	Not Significant
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED			
1	Transportation Problem	$\chi^2 = 14.2973$	Significant (0.01)
2	Accommodation Problem	$\chi^2 = 6.067005$	Not Significant
3	Language Problem	$\chi^2 = 0.220295$	Not Significant
4	Lack of Support Materials	$\chi^2 = 6.129368$	Not Significant
5	Mistreatment form Staff	$\chi^2 = 4.474875$	Not Significant
6	Resistance from School	$\chi^2 = 4.165123$	Not Significant
7	Lack of Infrastructure	$\chi^2 = 9.830673$	Significant (0.05)
8	Programme Timings	$\chi^2 = 4.051061$	Not Significant

1. Effect and utility of the training programmes.

The study found no significant difference between the opinions of male and female teachers in almost all the areas with the exception of the area of assessment and evaluation where the male teachers have been observed to have a higher opinion.

2. Capabilities of resource person.

The present study revealed no substantial difference between the opinions of male and female teachers in the capabilities of resource person of the training programmes with the sole exception of their ICT Skills where the female teachers have expressed opinions more positive than their male counterparts.

3. Problems.

It is also evident that there are no differences between the problems encountered by male and female teachers except in the areas of transportation and lack of infrastructure during the training programmes.

C. Comparison of the perceptions of different teachers based on their teaching experience.

Sl no	Item	χ^2 (df = 3)	Significance
UTILITY OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES			
1	Subject Mastery	$\chi^2 = 1.08225$	Not Significant
2	Proficiency in Teaching Skills	$\chi^2 = 10.36761$	Significant (0.05)
3	Classroom Management	$\chi^2 = 5.289006$	Not Significant
4	Variety in Learning Experiences	$\chi^2 = 2.751272$	Not Significant
5	Using Non-Conventional Resources	$\chi^2 = 9.334808$	Significant (0.05)
6	Management of Working Relationships	$\chi^2 = 0.177712$	Not Significant
7	Mobilisation of Community Resources	$\chi^2 = 14.87395$	Significant (0.01)
8	Development of Parent-Teacher Relationship	$\chi^2 = 5.965837$	Not Significant
9	Professional Development	$\chi^2 = 3.49471$	Not Significant
10	Balance of Lifestyle	$\chi^2 = 1.317827$	Not Significant
11	Conducting Discussions	$\chi^2 = 2.175833$	Not Significant
12	Presentation of Concepts	$\chi^2 = 2.460122$	Not Significant
13	Enrichment of Content Knowledge	$\chi^2 = 2.65549$	Not Significant
14	Assessment and Evaluation	$\chi^2 = 2.073766$	Not Significant
15	Identification of Student Weaknesses	$\chi^2 = 3.509294$	Not Significant
CAPABILITIES OF RESOURCE PERSONS			
1	Academic Qualification	$\chi^2 = 5.868581$	Not Significant
2	Adequate Experience	$\chi^2 = 0.658437$	Not Significant
3	Realistic Experience	$\chi^2 = 3.452718$	Not Significant
4	ICT Skills	$\chi^2 = 1.156307$	Not Significant
5	Open-mindedness and Empathy	$\chi^2 = 0.693936$	Not Significant
6	Pedagogic Skills	$\chi^2 = 2.155616$	Not Significant
7	Adequate Preparation	$\chi^2 = 3.237528$	Not Significant
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED			
1	Transportation Problem	$\chi^2 = 2.993287$	Not Significant
2	Accommodation Problem	$\chi^2 = 2.49969$	Not Significant
3	Language Problem	$\chi^2 = 0.966235$	Not Significant
4	Lack of Support Materials	$\chi^2 = 0.333644$	Not Significant
5	Mistreatment form Staff	$\chi^2 = 1.074111$	Not Significant
6	Resistance from School	$\chi^2 = 3.248738$	Not Significant
7	Lack of Infrastructure	$\chi^2 = 1.363319$	Not Significant
8	Programme Timings	$\chi^2 = 1.358737$	Not Significant

1 Effect and utility of the training programmes.

The study found no significant differences between the opinions of junior and senior teachers in most areas regarding the utility of the training programmes with the exception of three areas, namely, development of proficiency in teaching skills, use of non-conventional resources and mobilisation of community resources; where compared to the senior teacher, the junior teachers have expressed the training programmes to be helpful and useful.

2 Capabilities of resource person.

The study also revealed almost no significant difference in the opinions of junior and senior teachers regarding the capabilities of resource person of the training programmes.

3 Problems encountered.

The study has shown no significant difference between the problems encountered or the lack of the same between junior and senior teachers during the training programmes.

D. Comparison of the perceptions of different teachers based on subjects taught.

Sl no	Item	χ^2 (df = 12)	Significance
UTILITY OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES			
1	Subject Mastery	$\chi^2 = 21.75603$	Significant (0.05)
2	Proficiency in Teaching Skills	$\chi^2 = 10.8029$	Not Significant
3	Classroom Management	$\chi^2 = 16.3729$	Not Significant
4	Variety in Learning Experiences	$\chi^2 = 16.37264$	Not Significant
5	Using Non-Conventional Resources	$\chi^2 = 10.46474$	Not Significant
6	Management of Working Relationships	$\chi^2 = 22.17095$	Significant (0.05)
7	Mobilisation of Community Resources	$\chi^2 = 8.802839$	Not Significant
8	Development of Parent-Teacher Relationship	$\chi^2 = 19.49042$	Not Significant
9	Professional Development	$\chi^2 = 10.94178$	Not Significant
10	Balance of Lifestyle	$\chi^2 = 10.50807$	Not Significant
11	Conducting Discussions	$\chi^2 = 19.06218$	Not Significant
12	Presentation of Concepts	$\chi^2 = 11.76162$	Not Significant
13	Enrichment of Content Knowledge	$\chi^2 = 21.60628$	Significant (0.05)
14	Assessment and Evaluation	$\chi^2 = 22.93496$	Significant (0.05)
15	Identification of Student Weaknesses	$\chi^2 = 17.36582$	Not Significant
CAPABILITIES OF RESOURCE PERSONS			
1	Academic Qualification	$\chi^2 = 20.67252$	Not Significant
2	Adequate Experience	$\chi^2 = 16.65828$	Not Significant
3	Realistic Experience	$\chi^2 = 33.15313$	Significant (0.01)
4	ICT Skills	$\chi^2 = 25.27191$	Significant (0.05)
5	Open-mindedness and Empathy	$\chi^2 = 18.40005$	Not Significant
6	Pedagogic Skills	$\chi^2 = 18.77579$	Not Significant
7	Adequate Preparation	$\chi^2 = 19.81235$	Not Significant
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED			
1	Transportation Problem	$\chi^2 = 14.87874$	Not Significant
2	Accommodation Problem	$\chi^2 = 13.0357$	Not Significant
3	Language Problem	$\chi^2 = 15.66036$	Not Significant
4	Lack of Support Materials	$\chi^2 = 12.08964$	Not Significant
5	Mistreatment form Staff	$\chi^2 = 12.61663$	Not Significant
6	Resistance from School	$\chi^2 = 22.59555$	Significant (0.05)
7	Lack of Infrastructure	$\chi^2 = 4.354069$	Not Significant
8	Programme Timings	$\chi^2 = 63.43371$	Significant (0.01)

1 Effect and utility of the training programmes.

The present study revealed that there were very few significant differences between the opinions of different subject teachers with the exception of the following areas:

- Subject mastery
- achievement of better working relationship
- enrichment of content knowledge
- assessment and evaluation of students

Among all the teachers, Science and Mizo teachers were found to have the lowest opinions of the training programmes regarding utility while that of the Social Science teachers was the highest.

2 Capabilities of resource persons.

Regarding the capabilities of the resource persons, the study found differences in the opinions of the various subject teachers only in two areas namely, realistic field experience and ICT skills.

The Science teachers also had the lowest opinions regarding the capabilities of the resource persons while that of the social science teachers was the highest

3 Problems encountered.

The present study has revealed that regarding the problems encountered by the trainees, there were differences in the opinions of the various subject teachers only in two areas, namely, resistance from schools and programme timing.

The study found that Mizo teachers complained the most about problems encountered while Mathematics teachers complained the least.

III. CONCLUSION

The study has revealed differences among the various districts regarding the various elements of the in-service training programmes which must be remedied immediately and measures must be taken up to ensure that all the districts in the state have access to resource persons that are of comparable quality. The present study revealed very few differences between the opinions of junior and senior teachers regarding the various aspects of the training programmes. Hence, it may be concluded that the training programmes are equally suitable for teachers of varying ages and experiences. It is also commendable that very few differences in opinions of various subject teachers were observed but some minor issues still need ironing out. It may be noted that Science teachers had the lowest opinions of the utility of the training programmes and capabilities of the resource persons

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